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MODERATING EFFECT OF BRAND AWARENESS ON COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND BRAND EQUITY: A STUDY OF DG- KHAN & JAMPUR CONSUMER'S

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ABSTRACT. The current study aims to investigate the relationship between country of origin and brand equity by incorporating moderating factor as brand awareness. The data is collected from consumers markets by using questionnaire. Thus, the study revealed significant relationship among country of origin and brand equity. Thus, brand awareness as moderator is also found significant between country of origin and brand equity.

1. INTRODUCTION

It became plethora of marketing domain and consumer's markets that influence brands are leading the markets and they made their own market place. Thus, each brand has its own value. And to measure the value of each brand identically a name introduced as 'brand equity'. The brand equity is actually a perception in the cognition of consumers. In other words it's the perceptual value of a brand in the mind of consumers. Such perceptual value can be drawn by various factors i.e brand awareness; brand compatibility, brand satisfaction, brand power and consumer's based equity of brand etc.

In market consumers are concerned to various factors regarding brands or products; country of origin image is also another factor that pinches consumer's cognition before purchasing. In Pakistan country of origin is also found significant in consumer's market like "Chinese products are cheap and has low quality" "Japanese products are trustworthy" and "Korean Products are moderate". Therefore, narration "made in" has strong correlation and psychological influence to shuffle brand equity.

This theoretical relationship is based on brand awareness (Atilgan et al., 2005). And such brand equity depends upon level of brand awareness regarding any brand that may boost chance of brand purchasing behavior in the mind of consumers (Nedungadi, 1990). Therefore awareness of brands plays a sound theoretical role to develop brand equity of any other country brand.

Thus, current study aims to investigate the relationship among country of origin and brand equity with mediating role of brand awareness. Theoretical it is found a significant relationship among these variables and current study will reveal sound suggestions for theorists, practitioners and research scholars regarding Pakistani market and consumers. However, current study is planned to investigate consumers of Pakistani context specifically DG- Khan & Jampur District.

The scheme of the study is planned in way that part one elaborate literature and hypothesis, part two describes methodology of study, part three describes results and discussions.

Thus, hypothesis of the study are as follows,

H1: There is significant relationship among country of origin and brand equity.

H2: There is significant moderating role of brand awareness among country of origin and brand equity

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study investigates about electronics appliances used by consumers of DG- Khan and Jampur market. The population of the study consists of electronics appliances market of Pakistan. Thus sample of study consists of DG- Khan and Jampur cities electronics market consumer's. The questionnaire source is used to data collection. While 300 questionnaires are distributed, 24 questionnaires are found incomplete and 276 are used for empirical tests. Moreover, data normality, Pearson's correlation and mediated regression are applied for data analyses.

The sample consists of 67.09% of male respondents and 32.91% of females. And after performing descriptive analyses all demographic variables is controlled i-e. gender, age, qualification, personal income and social status. Thus, no demographic variable is found significant cause of Pakistani context i-e underdeveloped context (Huang, & Van De Vliert, 2003).

3. RESULTS & ANALYSES

Table 01
Reliability Analyses

The reliability an analysis is performed by using Cronbach's alpha. Thus, all variables have sound reliability results as prior studies concluded.

Variable	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Country of Origin	07	0.877%
Brand Awareness	04	0.697%
Brand Equity	07	0.794%

COO = Country of Origin, BA = Brand Awareness, BE= Brand Equity

Hence, total scale's reliability is 0.7893% that is satisfactory. And because of higher reliability no item is deleted from scale.

Table 02
Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Country of Origin	2.08	1.01
Brand Awareness	2.54	1.21
Brand Equity	2.13	0.87

To measure the response descriptive statistics is carried out. The mean value of country of origin, brand awareness and brand equity are 2.08, 2.54 and 2.13 respectively. While, standard deviation values are 1.01, 1.21 and 0.87 as well.

Table 03
Correlation Analyses

Variables	1	2	3
Country of Origin	1		
Brand Awareness	.402**	.412**	
Brand Equity	.431**	.446**	.487**

*. Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (02-tailed)

**. Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (02-tailed)

The table shows correlation among country of origin, brand awareness and brand equity. Correlation analyses described that country of origin has positive significant correlation with brand awareness (.402**, $p < 0.01$ & .412**, $p < 0.01$). While, brand awareness is positively correlated with brand equity (.431** $p < 0.01$, .446** $p < 0.01$ & .487** $p < 0.01$).

Table 04
Moderated Regression Analyses

Predictor's	beta	R - Square	ΔR - Square
Step 01		.0087	
Control Variables	.0657		
Step 02			
Country of Origin	.128**	.337	.311
Brand Awareness	.149**		
Brand Equity	.238**		

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

In regression analyses step 01 all demographic variables are controlled and in step two independent variables, dependent variable and moderating variable are entered to check the relationship. Therefore, country of origin is found significant (.128** $p < 0.01$), brand awareness is also found positively significant (.149** $p < 0.01$) between country of origin and brand equity. Thus, brand equity is also found significant.

4. CONCLUSION

The study focused to investigate the relationship of country of origin on brand equity with moderating role of brand awareness. The study acquired the data from consumers of electronics appliances of DG-Khan and Jampur districts. Moreover, the study revealed significant contributions as historic investigations that country of origin is found significant with brand equity and brand awareness is found also positively significant as moderator. Thus, the future studies can be investigated by incorporating other theoretical frame works and variables like word of mouth to have deep insight.

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